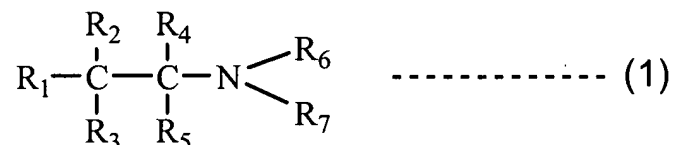


IN THE CLAIMS:

Please replace the claims with the claims provided in the listing below wherein status, amendments, additions and cancellations are indicated.

1. (Original) A skin conditioner containing one or more kinds of ingredient selected from the group consisting of an ammonium salt and ions thereof, a compound represented by the formula (1):



(wherein, R₁, R₂ and R₃ each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a lower alkoxy group that may optionally have a substituent, a phosphoryloxy group, an aryl group that may optionally be substituted with a hydroxyl group, an amino group, a sulfonic acid group, a phosphatidyloxy group, a lower alkyl group that may optionally be substituted with a hydroxyl group or an amino group, a carboxyl group, a guanidino group or a lower alkyl group substituted with a guanidino group;

R₄ and R₅ each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a lower alkyl group or an aryl group that may optionally be substituted with a

hydroxyl group or an amino group, or a carboxyl group, or R_4 and R_5 , together with an adjacent carbon atom, form a carbonyl group;

R_6 and R_7 each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a lower alkyl group that may optionally be substituted with a hydroxyl group, a lower alkylcarbonyl group, an aryl group or an aralkyl group, or R_6 and R_7 represent alkylene groups, which may optionally have a substituent, that together form a 5-membered ring with an adjacent atom; and

nitrogen atoms in the formula may be in a quaternary form with a lower alkyl group) and ions thereof and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

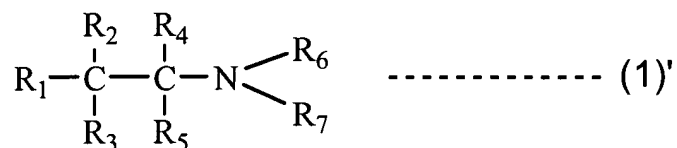
2. (Original) A skin conditioner according to claim 1 wherein the skin conditioner is an agent for restoration of the skin's barrier mechanism and function.

3. (Original) A skin conditioner according to claim 1 wherein the skin conditioner is an agent for the prevention, prevention of exacerbation or treatment of atopic dermatitis.

4. (Original) The skin conditioner according to any one of claims 1 through 3 wherein the compound represented by the formula (1) is selected from the group consisting of L-arginine, ethanolamine, 2-methoxyethylamine, O-phosphorylethanolamine, 2-ethylaminoethanol, diethanolamine, 2-

dimethylaminoethanol, choline, 2-amino-2-hydroxymethyl-1,3-propanediol, noradrenalin, phenethylamine, ethylenediamine, taurine, phosphatidylethanolamine, N-(2-hydroxyethyl)acetamide, 2-(methylamino)ethanol, 2-anilinoethanol, 2-(benzylamino)ethanol, 3-amino-1-propanol, 2-amino-1-butanol, putrescine, DL-pyroglutamic acid and triethanolamine.

5. (Original) The skin conditioner according to any one of claims 1 through 3 comprising one or more kinds of ingredient selected from the group consisting of L-arginine and ions thereof and/or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof; an ammonium salt and ions thereof, a compound represented by the formula (1)':



(wherein, R₁, R₂ and R₃ each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a lower alkoxy group that may optionally have a substituent, a phosphoryloxy group, an aryl group that may optionally be substituted with a hydroxyl group, an amino group, a sulfonic acid group, a phosphatidyloxy group, a lower alkyl group

that may optionally be substituted with a hydroxyl group or an amino group, a guanidino group or a lower alkyl group substituted with a guanidino group;

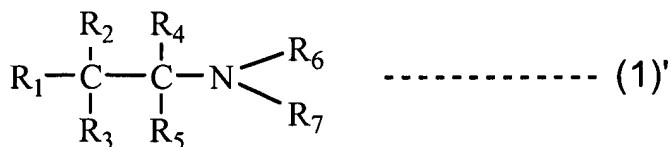
R_4 and R_5 each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a hydroxyl group, or a lower alkyl group or an aryl group that may optionally be substituted with a hydroxyl group or an amino group, or R_4 and R_5 , together with an adjacent carbon atom, form a carbonyl group;

R_6 and R_7 each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a lower alkyl group that may optionally be substituted with a hydroxyl group, a lower alkylcarbonyl group, an aryl group or an aralkyl group, or R_6 and R_7 represent alkylene groups, which may optionally have a substituent, that together form a 5-membered ring with an adjacent atom; and

nitrogen atoms in the formula may be in a quaternary form with a lower alkyl group) and salts thereof and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

6. (Original) The skin conditioner according to any one of claims 1 to 3 comprising one or more kinds of ingredient selected from the group consisting of an ammonium salt and/or ions thereof;

a compound represented by the formula (1)':



(wherein, R_1 , R_2 and R_3 each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a lower alkoxy group that may optionally have a substituent, a phosphoryloxy group, an aryl group that may optionally be substituted with a hydroxyl group, an amino group, a sulfonic acid group, a phosphatidyloxy group, a lower alkyl group that may optionally be substituted with a hydroxyl group or an amino group, a guanidino group or a lower alkyl group substituted with a guanidino group;

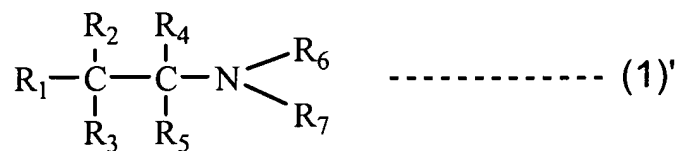
R_4 and R_5 each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a hydroxyl group, or a lower alkyl group or an aryl group that may optionally be substituted with a hydroxyl group or an amino group, or R_4 and R_5 , together with an adjacent carbon atom, form a carbonyl group;

R_6 and R_7 each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a lower alkyl group that may optionally be substituted with a hydroxyl group, a lower alkylcarbonyl group, an aryl group or an aralkyl group, or R_6 and R_7 represent alkylene groups, which may optionally have a substituent, that together form a 5-membered ring with an adjacent atom; and

nitrogen atoms in the formula may be in a quaternary form with a lower alkyl group) and salts thereof and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

7. (Original) The skin conditioner according to any one of claims 1 through 3 comprising one or more kinds of ingredient selected from the group

consisting of L-arginine and ions thereof and/or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof; an ammonium salt and/or ions thereof, a compound represented by the formula (1)':



(wherein, R₁, R₂ and R₃ each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a lower alkoxy group that may optionally have a substituent, a phosphoryloxy group, an aryl group that may optionally be substituted with a hydroxyl group, an amino group, a sulfonic acid group, a phosphatidyloxy group, a lower alkyl group that may optionally be substituted with a hydroxyl group or an amino group, a guanidino group or a lower alkyl group substituted with a guanidino group;

R₄ and R₅ each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a hydroxyl group, or a lower alkyl group or an aryl group that may optionally be substituted with a hydroxyl group or an amino group, or R₄ and R₅, together with an adjacent carbon atom, form a carbonyl group;

R_6 and R_7 each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a lower alkyl group that may optionally be substituted with a hydroxyl group, a lower alkylcarbonyl group, an aryl group or an aralkyl group, or R_6 and R_7 represent alkylene groups, which may optionally have a substituent, that together form a 5-membered ring with an adjacent atom; and

nitrogen atoms in the formula may be in a quaternary form with a lower alkyl group) and salts thereof and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

8. (Original) The skin conditioner according to claim 5 wherein the compound represented by the formula (1)' is selected from the group consisting of ethanolamine, 2-methoxyethylamine, O-phosphorylethanolamine, 2-ethylaminoethanol, diethanolamine, 2-dimethylaminoethanol, choline, 2-amino-2-hydroxymethyl-1,3-propanediol, noradrenalin, phenethylamine, ethylenediamine, taurine, phosphatidylethanolamine, N-(2-hydroxyethyl)acetamide, 2-(methylamino)ethanol, 2-anilinoethanol, 2-(benzylamino)ethanol, 3-amino-1-propanol, 2-amino-1-butanol, putrescine, DL-pyroglutamic acid and triethanolamine.

9. (Original) The skin conditioner according to any one of claims 1 through 3 further containing a natural substance preparation.

10. (Original) The skin conditioner according to claim 9 wherein the natural substance preparation is a rice preparation.

11. (Original) The skin conditioner according to any one of claims 1 through 3 further containing a moisture retention agent.

12. (Previously Presented) A method of improving moisture retention ability of skin and/or treating or protecting skin for another purpose, comprising applying to skin the skin conditioner according to claim 1.

13. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 12, wherein the skin to which the skin conditioner is applied requires prevention, prevention of exacerbation or treatment of atopic dermatitis.

14. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 12, wherein the skin to which the skin conditioner is applied requires moisturization.

15. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 12, wherein the skin to which the skin conditioner is applied requires restoration of the barrier mechanism and function thereof.

16. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 12, wherein the skin to which the skin conditioner is applied requires conditioning of corneal layer thereof.

17. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 12, wherein the skin to which the skin conditioner is applied requires conditioning of epidermal keratocytes thereof.

18. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 12, wherein the skin to which the skin conditioner is applied requires conditioning epidermis thereof.

19. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 12, wherein the skin to which the skin conditioner is applied requires prevention or treatment of skin disease selected from the group consisting of atopic dermatitis, dry skin symptoms, pruritis, frostbite, cracking, chapped skin, skin aging symptoms, skin damage caused by ultraviolet rays, darkening, blackening, skin disorders arising in the epidermis, physicochemical skin disorders, skin symptoms caused by the use of water, soap, detergents, surfactants or solvents, adverse side effects of externally applied skin preparations, biological skin disorders, dermatitis and eczema.

20. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 19, wherein dry skin symptoms are symptoms selected from atopic skin, dry or rough skin, aged skin, ichthyosis, dry skin, chapped skin, asteatosis, xeroderma, dry eczema, facial dry eczema and progressive volar keratoderma, and/or selected from erythema, sclerosis and cornification, cracking, scaling, wrinkles, itching and dry marks, while skin aging symptoms are selected from wrinkles and decreased skin tightness and elasticity, skin damage caused by ultraviolet rays is selected from spots and freckles, skin disorders arising from the epidermis are selected from turnover abnormalities, fineness and moistness, physicochemical skin disorders are selected from cuts, burns and floor burns, biological skin disorders are selected from athlete's foot and skin infections, and inflammatory cornification disorders are selected from the group consisting to dermatitis and eczema.

21. (New) The method according to Claim 12, wherein the skin to which the skin conditioner is applied has an impaired skin moisture retention ability.

22. (New) The method according to claim 21, wherein said impaired skin moisture retention ability comprises impaired corneal layer moisture retention ability.